**Discussing your development with your manager**

If you want your manager to invest in your development, you need to do your homework before you have the conversation.

Your manager will want to know exactly why this is the right program for you and how it will help the team and the organization more broadly.

Here are four steps to help answer your manager’s questions before I offer you some more details supported by draft funding request emails:

1. Clarify the benefits the program will bring to you, your team and your organization
2. Choose your preferred learning pathway
3. Map out how you plan to fit the program in around your own work
4. Get your pitch right. Use our pointers, but tailor your messaging to suit your situation. Our draft letters may help.

Here are some thoughts to help you at each stage.

**1. Clarify the benefits the program will bring to you, your team and your organization**

Although the learning will primarily benefit you and your career, the benefits will spill over to the rest of your team and more broadly to your organization. Let me work through how it may help, starting with you.

***You first ….***

Although we can provide some ideas to help you here, there are two questions you need to answer yourself.

1. *How will Clarity First help you in your current role?* Think about what gaps it will help fill. Here are some words that may help:

I will be more adept at stakeholder management. The program introduces clear and concrete steps for me to think through in relation to each piece of communication.

I will gain greater traction with senior leaders during important decision-making discussions. My audiences won’t need to ask so many questions to understand what I am delivering to them. This means we will get straight to the issues that matter, have better quality discussions and make better decisions more quickly.

I will spend less time chasing for answers and fighting fires. By getting fast responses to my everyday communication, I will free myself up to not only be less frustrated, but to deliver more value to the team.

1. *How will Clarity First support your longer-term performance?*

Strong communication skills will help me, whether I remain in a technical specialist role or move into the leadership ranks. Here are some ways that the program has helped others:

*I will gain more respect as a technical expert because I can convey the right level of detail.* I will know how to elevate above the details and place them into the relevant context, rather than focusing too much on the details themselves.

*I will have a framework for thinking about and communicating not just what needs to be done, but why it needs to be done.* By improving my ability to articulate ‘the why’, I will engage non-technical audiences in my recommendations better. I will also be able to also contribute more to business discussions, rather than focusing primarily on technical issues.

***Your team …***

Communication skills are essential for everybody. Completing Clarity First will enable me to share ideas that will help the rest of the team while also reducing the amount of coaching and rework I need from you.

1. *I will have ideas and tools to share.* The program’s live working sessions will give me techniques for collaborating with my colleagues around any piece of communication.
2. *I may communicate more.* There are times when I don’t communicate enough because I am not always aware that I need to. I will be more aware of these situations, particularly as I help stakeholders come on the journey with me toward a decision.
3. *I may also communicate less. O*ther participants say they cut the length of their papers and presentations in (at least) half. They realise they don’t always need a major paper or PowerPoint, but rather conversations will do the job and get the outcome they need more quickly.

***Your organization …***

Taking less time to prepare and communicate better quality thinking has benefits beyond you and your team. The organization as a whole will appreciate the increased velocity of day-to-day operations, particularly concerning decision-making.

When a piece of communication is crafted well, it is easier to understand, leads to less miscommunication, gets faster and more actionable responses.

**2. Choose your preferred learning pathway**

This year we are offering three learning pathways for you to choose from: one self-directed, one directed and one with one-on-one support from me.

**Self-directed** – **Our Classic Pathway is ideal if you need to up and down your effort to fit within other commitments.** This pathway allows you to progress through the learning at your own pace and attend regular group working sessions. You can also access a growing library of recorded materials, including structured courses on both communication and problem solving and collaborative working sessions that lead to a vast array of sample documents you can use as reference.

**Directed** – **Our Intensive Pathway is ideal for those of you who want a more focused learning experience.** You will have three months to complete the pre-work and attend the six, 90-minute live workshops starting Thursday 16 February 2023 unless you join as an Early Bird and receive five months’ access.

You will have access to all our online materials, our regular working sessions and also recordings of Intensive Workshop series should you miss any.

We also allow a few weeks at the end of the program to allow for slippage, as well as an opportunity to extend your program access on a month by month or annual basis if you would like to continue your learning.

**Supported** – **Our Foundation Pathway offers 1-1 support.** It includes everything offered in the Classic and Intensive Pathways as well as four 30-minute 1-1 coaching sessions over a year and 6 opportunities to request feedback on your own communication. I will of course sign an NDA to protect your confidentiality.

**3. Map out how you plan to fit the program in around your own work**

Regardless of your chosen pathway, Clarity First syncs with your work schedule rather than taking you away from it. This increases the chances of you translating the learning into your day-to-day work. Here are some words that may help you when communicating this with your manager.

1. *The program integrates with my work priorities.* I can choose to work completely solo, or join the six Intensive Workshops, which start on February 10, 2022. These 90-minute workshops are scheduled for 8am and 5pm Sydney time. Depending on the pathway we choose, I will invest between one and three hours a week to my skill building: time which I will quickly get back as I reduce rework.
2. *The program offers opportunities to progress on my own work.* The working sessions are an ideal opportunity to discuss and even workshop my communication. These sessions offer a great place to have rich discussions while maintaining the essential confidentiality. Sanitising out sensitive details is surprisingly achievable, and other participants will have valuable insights that contribute to your work.

**4. Get your pitch right**

We anticipate that your manager will want a short list of reasons explaining why you would like to join the program. Here are some suggestions, which tie together some of the ideas above and are phrased from your perspective to help you cut, paste and edit rather than starting from scratch.

I have offered three versions: one for each learning pathway.

\* \* \*

We wish you all the best in your discussions with your manager. Do let us know if you have further questions. You are welcome to email us at contact@clarityfirstprogram.com

**INTENSIVE PATHWAY**

To:

From:

Subject: Education Funding Request

Hi **[Insert first name],**

I’ve found an online communication skills course taught by a former McKinsey communication specialist called [Clarity First](https://clarityfirstprogram.com/) and I’m writing to request your approval and funding support.

Based on reviews and testimonials, Clarity First will help me dramatically improve my ability to communicate complex ideas and return the $1,290 (inc. taxes) fee in spades. This 3-month program will help me

**Prepare more insightful communication that requires less rework from you.** [Clarity First](https://clarityfirstprogram.com/) will help me organise my ideas clearly and succinctly no matter how complex they are. Other participants say they deliver substantially shorter communication that requires less rework and gets faster approvals.

**Adopt a rigorous and tested framework.** I will learn a powerful analytical framework that will help me clarify my thinking before communicating in any form to any audience. It is based on the Minto Pyramid Principle, which was developed at McKinsey. Davina and her colleagues have adapted the approach so professionals inside and outside consulting environs can benefit.

**Master skills and templates I can share.** Although I will be the one doing the work, the team will also benefit. We will use techniques and templates during coaching sessions that I can share with the team.

**Iteratively apply what I learn to my own work.** I will have access to independent online learning that I can complete anywhere in short chunks, small group coaching and six 90-minute live workshops scheduled to suit any time zone. I will also have access to an extensive library of samples developed during previous coaching sessions.

**Learn from an expert.** Davina Stanley has been helping experts communicate complex ideas since she joined McKinsey more than 20 years ago. She was also approved by Barbara Minto to teach the Pyramid Principle ® in 2009. Since then, she has helped people from graduates to the C-Suite across a vast array of disciplines in Australia and globally, often focusing on those in technical disciplines. She also helped BCG design their structured thinking program for their consultants.

Thank you for considering this request. I’m happy to talk with you if you’d like any further information.

Regards,

**[Insert your name]**

**CLASSIC PATHWAY**

To:

From:

Subject: Education Funding Request

Hi **[Insert first name],**

I’ve found an online communication skills course taught by a former McKinsey communication specialist called [Clarity First](https://clarityfirstprogram.com/) and I’m writing to request approval to register and get company funding.

Based on reviews and testimonials, Clarity First will help me dramatically improve my ability to communicate complex ideas and return the $1,590 (inc. taxes) fee in spades. This program will help me

**Prepare more insightful communication that requires less rework from you.** [Clarity First](https://clarityfirstprogram.com/) will help me organise my ideas clearly and succinctly no matter how complex they are. Other participants say they deliver substantially shorter communication that requires less rework and gets faster approvals.

**Adopt a rigorous and tested framework.** I will learn a powerful analytical framework that will help me clarify my thinking before communicating in any form to any audience. It is based on the Minto Pyramid Principle, which was developed at McKinsey. Davina and her colleagues have adapted the approach so professionals inside and outside consulting environs can benefit.

**Master skills and templates I can share.** Although I will be the one doing the work, the team will also benefit. We will use techniques and templates during coaching sessions that I can share with the team.

**Iteratively apply what I learn to my own work.** I will have access to a mix of independent online learning that I can complete anywhere as well as regular group coaching sessions with Davina. I will also have access to an extensive library of samples developed during previous coaching sessions.

**Learn from an expert.** Davina Stanley has been helping experts communicate complex ideas since she joined McKinsey more than 20 years ago. She was also approved by Barbara Minto to teach the Pyramid Principle ® in 2009. Since then, she has helped people from graduates to the C-Suite across a vast array of disciplines in Australia and globally, often focusing on those in technical disciplines. She also helped BCG design their structured thinking program for their consultants.

Thank you for considering this request. I’m happy to talk with you if you’d like any further information.

Regards,

**[Insert your name]**

**PS** – I can also join monthly for $159 per month if you would prefer a smaller investment

**FOUNDATION PATHWAY**

To:

From:

Subject: Education Funding Request

Hi **[Insert first name],**

I’ve found an online communication skills course taught by a former McKinsey communication specialist called [Clarity First](https://clarityfirstprogram.com/) and I’m writing to request approval to register and get company funding.

Based on reviews and testimonials, Clarity First will help me dramatically improve my ability to communicate complex ideas and return the $3,490 (inc. taxes) annual fee in spades. This 12-month program will help me

**Prepare more insightful communication that requires less rework from you.** [Clarity First](https://clarityfirstprogram.com/) will help me organise my ideas clearly and succinctly no matter how complex they are. Other participants say they deliver substantially shorter communication that requires less rework and gets faster approvals.

**Adopt a rigorous and tested framework.** I will learn a powerful analytical framework that will help me clarify my thinking before communicating in any form to any audience. It is based on the Minto Pyramid Principle, which was developed at McKinsey. Davina and her colleagues have adapted the approach so professionals inside and outside consulting environs can benefit.

**Master skills and templates I can share.** Although I will be the one doing the work, the team will also benefit. We will use techniques and templates during coaching sessions that I can share with the team.

**Iteratively apply what I learn to my own work.** I will have access to a mix of independent online learning that I can complete anywhere, regular group coaching sessions and 1-1 access to Davina. She is offering 4 x 30-minute 1-1 coaching sessions over the year as well as six opportunities to submit communication for feedback. I will also have access to an extensive library of samples developed during previous coaching sessions.

**Learn from an expert.** Davina Stanley has been helping experts communicate complex ideas since she joined McKinsey more than 20 years ago. She was also approved by Barbara Minto to teach the Pyramid Principle ® in 2009. Since then, she has helped people from graduates to the C-Suite across a vast array of disciplines in Australia and globally, often focusing on those in technical disciplines. She also helped BCG design their structured thinking program for their consultants.

Thank you for considering this request. I’m happy to talk with you if you’d like any further information.

Regards, **[Insert your name]**